

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15

AID-05 CEA-01 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-01 CIEP-02 STR-04

TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 /095 W

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R 041345Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1643

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 08421

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, EGEN, UK, EEC

SUBJECT: TORIES WIND UP REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN

SUMMARY: MARGARET THATCHER HELD FINAL CONSERVATIVE PARTY PRESS CONFERENCE OF REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN JUNE 3. SHE URGED A LARGE POSITIVE VOTE FOR UK TO REMAIN IN EUROPE. SIDE ISSUES DEVELOPED BY PRESS QUESTIONS, HOWEVER, FOCUSED ON OPPOSITION WITHIN CONSERVATIVE PARTY TO COMMON MARKET MEMBERSHIP, HER OWN ACTIVITIES IN THE CAMPAIGN PERIOD, AND PROSPECTS FOR CROSS-PARTY POLITICAL

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UNITY AFTER REFERENDUM. END SUMMARY

1. CONSERVATIVE PARTY LEADER MARGARET THATCHER HELD PRESS CONFERENCE JUNE 3 IN FINAL WIND UP BEFORE REFERENDUM VOTE JUNE 5. IN HER BRIEF INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT, MRS. THATCHER STRESSED THE HISTORIC INTEREST OF CONSERVATIVES (SINCE CHURCHILL THROUGH MACMILLAN, DOUGLAS-HOME AND HEATH) IN EUROPE. SHE OUTLINED BREAKDOWN IN CONSERVATIVE VOTE ON EUROPE IN HOUSE OF COMMONS IN APRIL 1975 STRESSING THAT 249 CONSERVATIVES OUT OF A TOTAL OF 275 HAD VOTED FOR EUROPE WITH ONLY 8 AGAINST, AND 18 ABSTENTIONS. CONSERVATIVES HAD THUS OVERWHELMINGLY BACKED PRIME MINISTER ON EUROPE, THOUGH MUCH OF HIS OWN PARTY HAD NOT. CONSERVATIVES WANTED A BIG TURNOUT OF THE ELECTORATE AND A LARGE PRO-VOTE. CONSERVATIVES WERE, THEREFORE, PUTTING MACHINERY INTO OPERATION TO GUARANTEE THESE RESULTS.

2. WHILE MOST QUESTIONS WERE BROADLY FOCUSED, A FEW QUESTIONERS CONCENTRATED ON THE ADVANCE TEXT OF A SPEECH EDWARD DUCANN WAS ABOUT TO GIVE TO THE EFFECT THAT LARGE NUMBER OF CONSERVATIVES OPPOSE UK MEMBERSHIP IN EUROPE AND HAD SUPPORTED CONSERVATIVE POLICY OUT OF "LOYALTY" TO THE PARTY LEADER. MRS. THATCHER, MAKING CLEAR SHE HAD NOT YET SEEN A COPY OF THE FULL TEXT OF DUCANN'S REMARKS, SAID PARLIAMENTARY VOTES AS WELL AS IMPRESSIONS FROM HER NUMEROUS SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, CONVINCED HER CONSERVATIVES OVERWHELMINGLY SUPPORTED UK MEMBERSHIP. SHE DENIED THIS SENTIMENT WAS ATTRIBUTABLE TO LOYALTY TO HER OR TO ANY OTHER LEADER. SHE REFUSED TO BE DRAWN INTO SPECULATION AS TO WHY DUCANN IS NOW CLAIMING EXISTENCE OF SIZABLE OPPOSITION WITHIN CONSERVATIVE PARTY, BUT NOTED HE HAD ABSTAINED ON PARLIAMENTARY VOTES ON EUROPE AS EARLY AS 1971. SHE THOUGHT HIS OPPOSITION TO MEMBERSHIP HAD BEEN CONSISTENT, AND IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION SAID SHE DID NOT BELIEVE HE WAS "OFF HIS ROCKER."

3. REGARDING THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS-PARTY ALLEGIANCES AND ALLIANCES BASED ON EXPERIENCES SHARED IN

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THE REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN, MRS. THATCHER SAID THE CONSERVATIVES WOULD CONTINUE AFTER THE REFERENDUM TO SUPPORT THOSE POLICIES OF THE LABOR GOVERNMENT WHICH THEY FOUND TO BE IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST. THE CONSERVATIVES WOULD CONTINUE TO OPPOSE THOSE POLICIES THEY FOUND NOT IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST, SUCH AS FURTHER NATIONALIZATION OF PROFITABLE INDUSTRIES. ONE REPORTER QUESTIONED WHETHER THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY UNDER HER LEADERSHIP WAS NOW ABANDONING THE MANIFESTO CALL FOR A "GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY." SHE DENIED THIS TO BE THE CASE, INSISTING, HOWEVER, THAT UNITY OF PURPOSE MUST PRECEDE UNCLASSIFIED

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UNITY OF ACTION. SHE ALSO DENIED HER STANCE ON THIS

ISSUE WAS ESSENTIALLY PASSIVE AND DEPENDENT UPON LABOR INITIATIVE.

4. COMMENT: A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS RELATED TO MRS. THATCHER'S LOW PROFILE IN THE REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN. BLAMING THE CONSERVATIVE PRESS OFFICE FOR LACK OF ADVANCE PUBLICITY ON HER SCHEDULE, MRS. THATCHER RATTLED OFF A LARGE NUMBER OF APPEARANCES AND SPEECHES SHE HAD GIVEN ON EC, ALL OF WHICH WITH ONE EXCEPTION WERE CONSERVATIVE PARTY MEETINGS. SHE POINTED OUT HER SPEECHES HAD BEEN HEAVILY REPORTED BY THE PROVINCIAL PRESS. SHE DID NOT ATTEMPT TO DEFEND WHAT MAY HAVE BEEN PRIMARILY A TACTICAL DECISION, NAMELY THAT THE CONSERVATIVE VOICE AT "UMBRELLA MEETINGS" WOULD BE HEATH'S OR WHITELOW'S RATHER THAN HER OWN, AND THAT SHE WOULD SPEAK PRIMARILY AT PARTY MEETINGS DURING THIS PERIOD. THIS POLICY MAY HAVE BEEN DEEMED POLITICALLY WISE.

5. MRS. THATCHER'S COMMENTS TO THE PRESS APPEARED TO BECOME SLIGHTLY MORE STRIDENT AND WASPISH AS SHE WAS QUESTIONED ABOUT HER LEADERSHIP STRATEGY. SO LONG AS THE PRESS DEALT WITH SUBSTANCE ON CONSERVATIVE POLICY, SHE WAS ON MUCH SURER GROUNDS AND DID NOT VISIBLY OR VOCALLY FLINCH. THE PRESS TREATS HER GENTLY (AND RESPECTFULLY) ON MOST OCCASIONS, THOUGH AT THIS PRESS CONFERENCE MOST OF THEIR QUESTIONS REFLECTED A GREATER INTEREST IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS WITHIN THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY THAN IN THE REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN PER SE.

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**TAGS:** PINT, PFOR, EGEN, UK, EEC, (THATCHER, MARGARET)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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